

In The Matter Of:
Department of Education
In Re: Maurice J. Moyer Charter School

Public Hearing
September 10, 2014

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P U B L I C H E A R I N G

IN RE: MAURICE J. MOYER ACADEMIC INSTITUTE
 CHARTER SCHOOL

Carvel State Office Building
820 North French Street
2nd Floor Auditorium
Wilmington, Delaware 19801

Wednesday, September 10, 2014
6:12 p.m.

BEFORE: Jennifer Nagourney, Executive Director,
 Charter School Office, Delaware
 Department of Education

Catherine J. Hickey, Deputy Attorney
General and Counsel for the State Board
of Education

Donna Johnson, Executive Director, State
Board of Education

Terry Whittaker, Member, State Board of
Education

Greg Coverdale, Member, State Board of
Education

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1 MS. NAGOURNEY: Good evening. I
2 declare this public hearing to be open. My name
3 Jennifer Nagourney. I'm the executive director
4 of the Charter School Office at the Delaware
5 Department of Education and I've been appointed
6 by the Secretary of Education to conduct this
7 public hearing. The charter of Maurice J. Moyer
8 Academic Institute was placed on formal review by
9 the Department of Education with the assent of
10 the State Board of Education. As required by
11 law, the matter was referred to the Charter
12 School Accountability Committee.

13 The joint public hearing is being
14 held by the Department of Education and the State
15 Board of Education to assist in the decision of
16 whether the criteria set forth for remedial
17 action in the Delaware Code have been satisfied.
18 This hearing provides the school an opportunity
19 to receive public comment. This hearing also
20 provides the school with an opportunity to
21 respond to the final report of the Accountability
22 Committee, which recommended revocation of the
23 charter.

24 I will now ask the others with me



1 today to introduce themselves.

2 MS. HICKEY: My name is Catherine
3 Hickey and I'm a Deputy Attorney General with the
4 Department of Justice and I serve as Counsel to
5 the Department of Education.

6 MS. JOHNSON: Donna Johnson,
7 executive director of the State Board of
8 Education.

9 MR. WHITTAKER: Terry Whittaker,
10 member of the State Board of Education.

11 MS. NAGOURNEY: I would like the
12 record to reflect that the notice of the time,
13 date and place of today's public hearing was
14 published in The News Journal and Delaware State
15 News on August 18, 2014. In addition, notice was
16 posted at the Charter School Accountability
17 Committee's official place of business, on the
18 Department of Education's website and on the
19 State Public Meeting Calendar on the State's
20 official website on August 18, 2014. Further,
21 the school was personally notified of the time,
22 date and place of today's public hearing on
23 July 19, 2014.

24 A court reporter is present so that a



1 record of this hearing can be made. It will be
2 necessary for each speaker to clearly identify
3 himself or herself before beginning to speak so
4 that the court reporter will be able to note who
5 you are. The record of this hearing will be
6 provided to the Secretary of Education and
7 members of the State Board of Education together
8 with any written or electronic comments received
9 at or before this hearing.

10 We will proceed in the following
11 manner. First, we will hear from any
12 representatives of the charter who wish to speak.
13 Then, we will take comment from anyone else who
14 desires to speak. We have sign-up sheets in the
15 front of the room and I have the list of people
16 who have signed up to speak here with me now. If
17 there is anyone who wants to speak, but has not
18 signed their name to the sheet, please come
19 forward now.

20 (No response.)

21 MS. NAGOURNEY: I would also like to
22 make sure that everyone is signed in whether you
23 are planning to speak or not and also ask that
24 everyone silence their phones before we proceed.



1 Before we begin we will have one more
2 introduction.

3 MR. COVERDALE: Greg Coverdale, State
4 Board member.

5 MS. NAGOURNEY: I intend to be as
6 liberal as time and reason allow in accepting
7 comments. However, I do reserve the right to
8 limit comment if it is purely repetitive or
9 cumulative. At this point I will accept comments
10 from any representatives of the school.

11 MR. DORSEY: Good evening, my name is
12 Keenan Dorsey, I'm the head of the school at
13 Maurice J. Moyer Academic Institute. Today I'm
14 representing the scholars, staff and supporting
15 community members of Maurice J. Moyer Academic
16 Institute. In the essence of time and focus I've
17 geared my statement towards four selected areas.
18 Also, I wasn't previously at Moyer last year,
19 this is my first year, and I'm going to speak
20 mostly about the future of our students in our
21 building.

22 Number one, members of the CSAC have
23 stated that, "The administration has made some
24 impressive changes this school year and look to



1 be off to a great start and if this
2 administration would have been in place two years
3 ago we wouldn't be sitting here today." This
4 expresses to me that even they recognize the
5 progress and positive changes that have taken
6 place so far this current school year.

7 This year our students and staff have
8 bought into the new vision and direction of the
9 school and the idea that they can academically
10 and socially be successful. This year they have
11 been given a new direction and are showing a
12 different attitude. I have been told by one
13 student this week that she feels like she matters
14 and has purpose now. A decision to close the
15 school regardless of a successful school year
16 would be counterproductive and detrimental to the
17 mindsets of our students, staff and supporting
18 community members.

19 I'm not dismissing that last year was
20 a tough year for MJM students and staff, but I do
21 not understand the logic of shutting down the
22 school after one challenging year. It has been
23 put on record that for the 2012-2013 school year
24 MJM students made significant academic gains.



1 For the 2013-2014 school year it was stated that
2 MJM had the worst test scores out of all the
3 charter schools. This statement is true, but MJM
4 did not have the worst test scores in the State.

5 There are other public and charter
6 schools that have had five plus years of academic
7 and social hardships, which have yet to
8 experience what MJM is going through now. I
9 strongly believe this is due to the fact that
10 many people do not recognize Maurice J. Moyer
11 Academic Institute opened as a new charter school
12 in 2012. They look at the name Maurice J. Moyer
13 Academic Institute and they still see the charter
14 of Maurice J. Moyer Academy, which had its own
15 academic and social issues in the past. If I am
16 correct on how Maurice J. Moyer Academic
17 Institute is being perceived as a school it is
18 completely unethical and inappropriate for anyone
19 to do so.

20 This past week we assessed our
21 students, high school students, using the I-Ready
22 program. Many students tested at a kindergarten
23 through fourth grade proficiency level. Let us
24 not forget Maurice J. Moyer Academic Institute is



1 a 6th through 12th grade institution. The
2 students we currently service showed up at our
3 front doors coming from local districts and other
4 charter schools at these proficiency levels. I
5 have a hard time understanding why a school will
6 be closed based on the ability to bring these
7 students to grade level proficiency in one year.
8 What saddens me the most is that if Moyer is
9 closed, these students will be forced to return
10 to the system that originally failed them.

11 East Side Charter, Kuumba Academy and
12 Prestige Academy are all schools that at one time
13 were struggling academic and social charter
14 schools. Today they're being lead with proven
15 and successful leadership and are in very good
16 condition. None of these schools would have been
17 able to become successful if they were not
18 granted the time. What would have happened if we
19 closed them after one unsuccessful year? You
20 would have never been able to find out the true
21 success and impact they would eventually have on
22 students.

23 With the current administration and
24 staff at Maurice J. Moyer Academic Institute I am



1 100 percent certain that we will also have the
2 same type of success. This year my team and
3 staff will prove that Maurice J. Moyer Academic
4 Institute is currently equipped to service all of
5 our students. At the end of this current school
6 year I am certain that the qualitative data that
7 has been communicated to me from everyone who has
8 visited our school this year will also reflect
9 the end result of quantitative data of students'
10 academic and social success. I appeal to you
11 that the State has sent a premature message to
12 our young people, parents, community supporters
13 that regardless of how much effort is put forth
14 and progress that is made this year their school
15 will be closed.

16 It is devastating for a school year
17 to work like that. The effects on current
18 progress, morale, psychological well-being and
19 performance will be greatly affected. My
20 students have been disappointed and let down too
21 many times in their lives. So, I ask that you
22 find it in your heart to provide my new team an
23 opportunity to provide an educational institute
24 that is stable and successful. Please do not



1 spontaneously revoke this charter. Thank you.

2 (Audience applause.)

3 MS. NAGOURNEY: Any additional
4 representatives from the school?

5 MS. WHITAKER-HANNON: Good evening,
6 my name is Nikia Whitaker-Hannon and I'm the
7 director of curriculum at Maurice J. Moyer
8 Academic Institute. I just wanted to address the
9 following concerns.

10 In February and March of 2013 the
11 school began discussions with DOE to complete
12 units of instruction. DOE claimed that the units
13 were due in June of 2011 when MJM Academic
14 Institute was a DOE school and that the school
15 had ignored DOE's requests. Since the decision
16 of the Charter School Accountability Committee is
17 based, according to the committee's statements,
18 on the school's performance from the past two
19 years it seems unreasonable to hold the new
20 charter and its members responsible for the past.

21 Over the past few years the school
22 has made several submissions regarding curriculum
23 and has received little or sporadic feedback from
24 DOE. At this time the curriculum still hasn't



1 been approved, however, during the CSAC hearings
2 the statement was made on more than one occasion
3 that concerns lay more with curriculum
4 implementation than with the curriculum itself.

5 During the last CSAC meeting Mr.
6 Blowman stated the department's concerns were
7 relative to MJM Academic Institute's capacity to
8 implement and not with the curriculum itself.
9 Considering that we have an entirely new teaching
10 staff and new head of school, a new curriculum
11 director, we're all committed to guiding
12 instruction, and we partner with Generation Ready
13 working side-by-side with our teachers and our
14 administration to ensure best practice and
15 successful implementation of the curriculum, a
16 recommendation to revoke the charter using
17 curriculum as a key factor in that decision seems
18 premature. Thank you.

19 MS. NAGOURNEY: For the purposes of
20 the court reporter if you want to make a
21 statement and you have something written down if
22 you share it with her, it will help with the
23 preparation of notes. Any additional
24 representatives from the school?



1 MS. HARVIN: Good evening, my name is
2 Lisa Harvin and I'm the state director for
3 Delaware for Generation Ready. As one of the
4 nation's largest providers of professional
5 development and school improvement services
6 Generation Ready has over 20 years of experience
7 in building teacher and leadership capacity and
8 improving student outcomes. Generation Ready
9 proposed a comprehensive approach to transforming
10 Moyer, one that takes into account the unique
11 challenges and strengths of the school and puts
12 parents, students and teachers at the center of
13 developing and implementing the transformation
14 plan.

15 Our approach begins with a strong
16 focus on school capacity, culture and curriculum,
17 includes comprehensive student support systems
18 and requires broad-based collaboration to ensure
19 ownership and accountability. Successful
20 sustainable school transformation relies on three
21 critical factors: Leadership development,
22 building professional practice and accountability
23 for school transformation.

24 In July 2014 Generation Ready entered



1 into a contract with Maurice J. Moyer Academic
2 Institute following an extensive review of data
3 available, including charter school performance
4 framework reports, an April 2012 comprehensive
5 school review, minutes and reports from the CSAC
6 processes, including curriculum modification and
7 formal review and DCAS data.

8 In collaboration with the school
9 improvement team we identified the three factors
10 for school transformation as our focal areas,
11 leadership development, building professional
12 practice and accountability. Generation Ready's
13 work with Moyer began on August 25th with a half
14 day workshop for teachers to introduce a
15 framework for improving student outcome. This
16 entailed discussion and activities focused on
17 high expectations, effective instruction,
18 supporting all students and continuous
19 improvement. I found the teachers, many of them
20 new to the school, to be eager to participate and
21 learn and committed to the success of the
22 students and the school.

23 Today, the Generation Ready team,
24 including a literacy consultant, a math



1 consultant and our senior director for
2 educational services, began the job of vetting
3 consultancy in leadership development and
4 building professional practice. After a walk-
5 through of all classrooms we collaborated with
6 members of the leadership team to begin
7 identifying specific goals for the year.

8 We identified a few priorities and
9 will come back to the table to finalize, but we
10 started with building a school-wide assessment
11 framework to guide data analysis, identify trends
12 and informed instruction, revising organizational
13 infrastructures to foster collaborative teamwork
14 and promote collective efficacy, align
15 instructional goals to meet student needs and
16 build capacity of teaching staff through a
17 gradual release model, a focus on instructional
18 core -- on the instructional core by implementing
19 common core standards with attention to meeting
20 the needs of diverse learners, implementing
21 highly effective instructional practices,
22 improving student outcome and facilitating
23 professional growth in pedagogy content; and,
24 finally, looking at what our board advisory



1 chair, Dr. Richard Elmore, calls eternal
2 coherence and that is defined as how the school
3 and the members of the school community share
4 values and beliefs about the success of the
5 school and the students.

6 In our work thus far we have found
7 the leadership, the staff and the board, to be
8 very supportive and excited about the
9 transformation of Moyer and we are excited to be
10 a part of the team. Thank you.

11 MS. NAGOURNEY: Any additional
12 representatives?

13 MS. MUCCIGROSSO: Hi, my name is Pat
14 Muccigrosso, M-U-C-C-I-G-R-O-S-S-O. That's why
15 at school they know me as Ms. Pat, the students
16 and the staff, because nobody can say that, not
17 even me and I married that. I do work at Moyer.
18 Sorry, honey, he is right here. I do work at
19 Moyer, this will be my third year there, and you
20 might be thinking that the only reason I'm here
21 tonight is because I want to keep my job. That's
22 not true. I'm a retired executive and I came to
23 Moyer to help out and I'm really excited about
24 what I've seen as the change there.



1 The first two years I was there there
2 were two different principals. What happened in
3 terms of management it's difficult to describe.
4 It wasn't just mismanagement, it was bad
5 management. I think what happened in the spring
6 was one person had the courage to stand up and
7 start pushing for a change in how that school was
8 managed and that person is Dr. Curry. He
9 actually had the courage of his convictions.

10 He involved a group of us, I'm the
11 secretary/office manager there, but the nurse and
12 a couple other people and some of the executive
13 team, to go out and define the job of principal,
14 try to figure out who would best fit this job and
15 who could we bring in. Get the candidates in,
16 stack rank them and be involved in the interviews
17 in the entire day long process they went through
18 and then make our recommendation for principal
19 for the school. In point of fact the two top
20 candidates are sitting in this room tonight,
21 Keenan Dorsey and Nikia Whitaker-Hannon. Mr.
22 Dorsi accepted principal and Ms. Whitaker-Hannon
23 to her credit accepted director of curriculum.

24 For the first time in these three



1 years bringing my full executive background as a
2 manager I'm hopeful, I'm really optimistic,
3 because in three months these two people have
4 done more in this school than I've seen done in
5 the entire time I've worked there. I think it
6 would be lovely if you could give us an
7 opportunity to see whether or not this change can
8 work not just for us, but for the scholars that
9 we are trying to teach.

10 I work at the school and I came back
11 for Dr. Curry and for the kids. They deserve the
12 same opportunities that many of us had, the
13 opportunity to have a full education, the
14 opportunity to graduate from high school and to
15 go on and to get jobs that are meaningful to them
16 and I think it would just be purely unfair to
17 close the school and give those children no place
18 to go but other schools further away from home.
19 They have enough challenges and their parents
20 have enough challenges. Let's give us a chance
21 and let's give this management team a chance as
22 well. I'm excited to be there this year. Thank
23 you.

24 (Audience applause.)



1 MS. NAGOURNEY: Anyone else?

2 MR. PRATCHER: Good evening. I'll
3 state my name for the court reporter even though
4 she knows me quite well. My name is Samuel D.
5 Pratcher, III. I have the privilege of serving
6 on the Moyer board in a legal capacity as I
7 practice law here in the State of Delaware. I
8 recognize the time limit that we have upon us and
9 I'll do my best to honor that time limit.

10 I'll start with the words of
11 Frederick Douglass, "If there is no struggle,
12 there is no progress." We have had struggles at
13 this school, but progress has already started and
14 it will continue if you give us that opportunity.
15 I acknowledge that there have been issues with
16 the school, but ultimately you need to view this
17 school as what it truly is, which is a new
18 charter school. Despite what has occurred in the
19 past this school and the leadership that has now
20 been put into place should not be held
21 responsible for any errors that occurred in years
22 past.

23 An opportunity is what we are
24 ultimately looking for, an opportunity to



1 demonstrate to the committee, which has already
2 acknowledged that this school is moving in the
3 right direction, an opportunity to ultimately
4 fulfill our full charter and I stress our full
5 charter to demonstrate that we can and we will
6 succeed.

7 As a member of the board I believe
8 that if we do not demonstrate the opportunity
9 that will be potentially presented to us to move
10 this school ultimately forward with progress,
11 then we should have the State ultimately shut it
12 down; but, the State should not decide that no
13 amount of work moving forward and any efforts
14 that are put into place should ultimately be done
15 in vein.

16 An issue that I see that ultimately
17 is troubling with what has potentially been
18 stated previously as far as the school ultimately
19 having the charter revoked is that despite what
20 could occur in this upcoming year and
21 opportunities that we believe will ultimately be
22 presented that doesn't matter. You need to stop
23 and think about what that says to these young men
24 and these young women who are our children of the



1 future who ultimately will lead our society as we
2 become older. Does improvement not mean
3 anything? Does student success not mean
4 anything? To ultimately tell a student today and
5 that student's parent that ultimately no matter
6 what they do throughout this school year it
7 ultimately is already done in vein, they need to
8 start looking for the next opportunity at another
9 school, the schools that you have already heard
10 the State has acknowledged has issues with.

11 In closing we, again, we don't hide
12 from responsibility. Do we as the leadership
13 need to take responsibility and move the school
14 forward? Absolutely. Will that be done? Yes.
15 And I state that as a member of the board for the
16 past two years. There have been changes. Our
17 first board meeting this year the parents who
18 made a decision to bring their kids back to this
19 school recognizing that they had other
20 opportunities to send their kids to other
21 schools, their most valuable possession, they
22 talked about the changes that their kids were
23 able to see in the leadership in the school.

24 That leadership will move this school



1 forward. It will be ultimately one of the best
2 schools in the State, I truly do believe that,
3 but ultimately all we need is an opportunity to
4 fulfill our full end of the bargain, which is to
5 finish our charter. Thank you.

6 (Audience applause.)

7 MS. COKER: Good evening, my name is
8 Bebe Ross Coker and I'm vice chair for the Moyer
9 board, C-O-K-E-R. I don't believe that I've ever
10 stood up at a hearing of this kind with the State
11 Board before, but this time I feel like I'm
12 compelled to do it simply because we got to give
13 it a chance, we have to.

14 I have this statement here and I'm
15 definitely going to give it to you, but you got
16 to think about there is not one high school in
17 Wilmington, not one. This school is poised to be
18 the very first high school in the City of
19 Wilmington since desegregation. Nobody wants to
20 talk about that, but I've been doing a lot of
21 thinking about it and I think it's only fair we
22 give it a chance. There is no major city
23 anywhere in this Country without a high school in
24 its own city. That's the first thing.



1 The other things that I want to
2 highlight because I don't believe I can do this
3 in three minutes simply because if I start
4 talking Keenan has to come and take the paper. I
5 call your attention to some of the feeder
6 schools, one, that were we to close the school
7 where we would go? And if you look at the DCAS
8 scores you will find that they are below the ones
9 that I can see going to in terms of Christina are
10 below the test scores for our kids per the DOE
11 DCAS test scores.

12 The other thing I would like to call
13 your attention to is that the comprehensive
14 review team that came from the University of
15 Delaware we frankly were excited about that
16 simply because we were told that this was going
17 to be an opportunity for us to see firsthand with
18 them going to all the schools, staying with us
19 for two days, they were going to do assessments,
20 let us know what is going on, what was wrong,
21 what we need to work on, what we need to improve
22 on. We did not know it was going to generate
23 this kind of negative commentary, which it did
24 almost immediately from the Accountability



1 Committee and from the State Board.

2 The other piece is that we are a
3 fledgling school and we had a good year and bad
4 year. We are not yet in our fourth year. It's
5 kind of difficult to buy the fact that we are
6 going to be dropped in midstream, so to speak.
7 I'm not saying that I justify anything that
8 happened last year. I wouldn't even think about
9 saying that. Kids have to be taught, but I also
10 know I would bring to your attention that the
11 young people we get -- and I hate saying this
12 like nobody's business -- they are the kids that
13 nobody else wants and that's a challenge because
14 I feel and all of us feel that they have the
15 right to be taught just like everybody else with
16 the same quality and everything.

17 I'm very disappointed we let them
18 down last year, but they did grow the year
19 before, but I can guarantee you that this year
20 with the kind of leadership that we have, with
21 the professional development we have, with the
22 assistance that we have, with the quality of
23 certified teachers we have you can't go anyplace
24 but up.



1 Now, the other piece of it is that
2 there appears to be other schools that have been
3 under formal review that kind of had some chances
4 that we didn't have. I haven't heard anybody say
5 anything about probationary status and that kind
6 of thing. I'm willing to go under it, we are
7 willing to go under probationary status or
8 anything else just to keep this school because we
9 know that this is our year.

10 Now, the other thing is I'm going to
11 ask you if you wouldn't mind -- and this is not a
12 criticism of the State or anybody else, but we
13 all kind of need to step back and look at what we
14 are doing in the State simply because we should
15 know from the research that closing a school
16 doesn't guarantee improvement, we know this.
17 There is no research to even prove that point or
18 even for us to look at it. I'm kind of asking
19 you on behalf of our school to do with us what
20 you do with the so many others.

21 There is an urban program that the
22 government started and I went to the opening for
23 that. All these things are in the newspaper
24 about common core. Do teachers get enough



1 training? The other part is DCAS results not
2 entirely reflecting kids' ability to learn. The
3 whole thing about the State to overhaul six urban
4 schools and that kind of thing. None of us is
5 perfect.

6 We have done some things, you have
7 done some things. We all need to improve and we
8 figure that now we are in a position, a better
9 position, because of the experience knowing what
10 the bad is and what the pretty good is. We're in
11 a much better position now with all of the
12 qualifications of what makes a good school, good
13 leadership, okay? Teachers that can embrace and
14 engage students and students that know that
15 they're cared about enough to learn and bring in
16 the parents. All of this stuff is being done
17 this year and I'm excited about that.

18 So, I'm going to ask you if you would
19 just give us this kind of time because when
20 someone said to me that regardless of what you do
21 this year, Bebe, we can just say that it's a good
22 year for the children, that's not good enough,
23 that's not fair, that's not fair at all. So, I'm
24 suggesting and asking, frankly, kind of begging,



1 to give us another chance because we are sitting
2 in a position that we have never been in before,
3 never been in, and I'm very proud to say I'm on
4 the board, been through it all. Thank you.

5 (Audience applause.)

6 MS. NAGOURNEY: I would ask anyone
7 who has joined us to please sign in if you have
8 not already done so.

9 MR. CURRY: Good evening, my name is
10 Chris Curry, chairman of Maurice J. Moyer
11 Academic Institute's board. My comments will be
12 as brief as possible and I want to make my
13 comments to the State Board representatives who
14 are here today, Mr. Coverdale and Mr. Whittaker,
15 because I am very much aware of the fact that the
16 Department of Education, who I consider to be
17 friends, have made their decision way before even
18 the committee made its.

19 So, my remarks is to say to State
20 Board members you have heard a lot of one more
21 chance, one more chance, and I have even read
22 some of the script that when Moyer came up for
23 its modification, how long do we have to put up
24 with this? The board has never been under any



1 review other than a correction plan. The State
2 -- let's put it where it is. As a matter of
3 fact, let me open my comments by saying I want to
4 talk about bullying because we teach our
5 children, we teach our professionals, that
6 bullying is inappropriate, but for the record I
7 want to say that's what is going on here.

8 In 2010 and '11 the State of Delaware
9 and the Department of Education ran Maurice J.
10 Moyer Academy and the test scores were horrible
11 both years. It was run by three entities. The
12 entities are again -- I forgot one, but I will
13 make sure all three of them are listed for the
14 record -- State of Delaware, the Department of
15 Education and K12. Those individuals ran Maurice
16 J. Moyer Academy in 2010 and 2011. In 2012 there
17 was a charter granted with a board established.
18 We came in and we said, This is egregious.

19 How would we put 500 children -- and
20 I agree with Bebe, I don't want to say these
21 children are anything less than the top, but the
22 reality is this. How do we put 500 troubled
23 children in a facility? I asked that question to
24 K12 administration and I still cannot understand



1 how they could agree to something that
2 preposterous and they said to me, We needed to
3 pay the rent. I said, What is the rent? \$56,000
4 a month. I said, Who entered into such an
5 agreement? We did, the State and K-12. I said,
6 We can't live like this.

7 So, as a new chairman of a board I
8 was told through the correction plan we needed to
9 get the facilities right and I went out and took
10 it from \$56,000 to \$13,000. That's why we put in
11 our first modification for an enrollment
12 reduction. Because we no longer needed 500
13 children, bodies, in a building in order to make
14 budget because we knew that would never work.
15 So, our whole goal was don't try to make
16 something work that wouldn't work. Putting 500
17 children and a lot of them who were troubled into
18 that facility it was just destruction waiting to
19 happen.

20 Then, the second thing was the
21 curriculum piece. We were told that if you take
22 care of the curriculum, you will be fine. Let me
23 give you a little bit of history. K12 -- and,
24 Ms. Whitaker, she went through it pretty fast --



1 K12 in 2011 did submit a curriculum and the exact
2 same roadblock that happened in 2011 where not
3 the curriculum, but how it's going to be
4 implemented was the roadblock and it was always
5 in the Math area. Interesting.

6 Then, when we got to this -- after I
7 met with the board I said, Listen, I am the
8 board, so please forgive me if I say I too much,
9 it's not me, it's the board; but, when the board
10 met with DOE and they said, Look, you need to get
11 a curriculum and we realized that K12 could not
12 deliver such a curriculum, we then went with
13 Springboard. The CSAC committee it was flying
14 through, no issues, meeting number one, meeting
15 number two, not an issue raised. When we get to
16 the exact last meeting, here is all the issues
17 and guess what area the issues were in? Math.

18 We need this, we need that, we need
19 to know how you are going to align this, how you
20 are going to do that and then the chairman of the
21 committee says, Our issue is not with
22 Springboard, but our issue is with your capacity.
23 That can be taken many ways. I choose to leave
24 that alone for right now, but for the record that



1 could be taken many ways because if there is
2 nothing wrong with the curriculum we were just
3 putting our modification so that we can align,
4 putting children who are at a disadvantage on the
5 line is just something we couldn't do. The
6 blended model is what we wanted, but they didn't
7 get caught up in those issues. They got caught
8 up in how you are aligning this curriculum and
9 how you are going to execute this curriculum that
10 really had no issues in it.

11 And while it was skirted to be so
12 many issues -- and I apologize to Mr. Whittaker,
13 but I did read your comment about how long we got
14 to deal with this? And the secretary said we can
15 have a conversation on it next week. I apologize
16 if you think we have been a troubled school, but
17 we have not really, honestly ever been up for
18 anything; but, you all are only getting, the
19 State Board, what the secretary is presenting to
20 you and that's why I used the term today
21 "bullying" because when you are bigger, when you
22 are more powerful, then you have the ability to
23 bully people.

24 I pastor one of the largest churches



1 in the City and I don't get a dime from Maurice
2 J. Moyer, but I am very committed to the people
3 of my City. The correction plan was the only
4 thing we got official from the Department of
5 Education. They said to us, Get your attendance
6 right. The State average is 95 percent. Last
7 year we were 76 percent. I may be a little bit
8 off, maybe it was 75, whatever it is. This year,
9 the last year, the year we just ended we were at
10 90 percent. That sounds like progress to me.

11 I shared in my report that 75 percent
12 of our children were brand-new and these were the
13 children that the district and other places said
14 we don't want, your next road is to be dropped
15 out. They found a place at Moyer and we tried to
16 educate them the best we could, but we did not
17 get the resources we needed. Although people
18 were saying they were giving us the resources,
19 the reality of it was it wasn't happening.

20 I want to go to the next thing is
21 this whole curriculum piece. Again, it should
22 have went through the first time, but it didn't.
23 The second time it was all because there was some
24 mechanical things that they felt should be



1 included and even this week -- I'm sorry -- on
2 Thursday I sent an e-mail to the Department of
3 Education and I said, When are we going to get
4 feedback on our curriculum, the last submission?
5 The response to me was, Oh, I thought you
6 received the feedback.

7 This is a common trend, but when they
8 stand before you two and the rest of the crew
9 that is part of the State Board they don't say
10 those things to you all. They just simply say,
11 Hey, once again, they have missed deadlines.
12 Once again, they're not doing what they need to
13 be doing and because they pretty much think they
14 have a control over what is happening because the
15 secretary is the one who does the recommending
16 all we can do is go off of what we are hearing.
17 I'm giving you the truth of the details of it.

18 We submitted, we have waited for
19 feedback. If you look at e-mails -- and, please,
20 I beg you to challenge me and say, Send me the
21 proof of asking where is our feedback coming in
22 2012 and even as recent as last week they're not
23 responding. When they do, it's too late. Right
24 before the State Board meeting I personally sent



1 an e-mail to the department and I said these
2 words, I need to know what is the secretary's
3 recommendation going to be because no one has
4 given us any feedback yet? And the response was,
5 You all are moving in the right direction so we
6 are going to need a little bit more time, but
7 when we get to the State Board meeting they still
8 said that somewhat, but they did not share that
9 they had not given us any feedback appropriately.

10 Let me move it because I don't want
11 to sound like I'm beating a dead horse. I did
12 share with you all that we now currently own our
13 facility. The facility that we are housed in is
14 owned by the board at Moyer because we didn't
15 believe that we should have such a high rent. We
16 were able to negotiate appropriately and now we
17 own our facility and from \$56,000 a year to now
18 being \$13,000 a year I satisfied another item on
19 their corrective action plan.

20 Reporting incidents, this is the last
21 item in their area. They said, Listen, your
22 problem at Moyer is you all are not reporting it.
23 There was a big blowup because -- when I say
24 "they," the department came into Moyer Academy



1 and said, This should be considered as an unsafe
2 item, this should be considered as an unsafe
3 item, and we, note we, the staff, was so scared
4 they just went on and put them all in, which
5 almost put us on the unsafe school list; but, I
6 personally went to the Governor and I said, This
7 should not be unsafe and when it was all said and
8 done I was right.

9 That's why I'm talking about bullying
10 because sometimes forgetting doesn't mean it's
11 forgotten. I'm going to move it a little bit
12 further. We over-reported. They put in that we
13 had 69 percent of our students have been
14 suspended. Did you know that only represented
15 about 18 children? Because these children,
16 beautiful as they are, come with issues and
17 instead of us just throwing them away we try to
18 work with them.

19 I'm calling for there to be an
20 opportunity for us to look at the details and
21 don't let anyone dictate -- and I think both of
22 you are exceptionally intelligent reading your
23 background. We have to make sure we are not
24 letting people just do things and we just let it



1 happen. I can't speak to DOE anymore because
2 their decision is already made. The secretary
3 will be bringing you a recommendation to go ahead
4 and support CSAC's decision.

5 But what Bebe started and I wanted to
6 finish, not in the history of Delaware since 1995
7 when the charter school law came into existence
8 there has only been one charter revoked and that
9 was Pencader, but that was after eight years of
10 trying being on formal review. I can even talk
11 about some of our schools that we consider to be
12 good schools who did hit formal review. When you
13 are bullying somebody and got the power to bully
14 them, it's easy to say, Look, we have been
15 dealing with this problem.

16 If you have not -- no one has dealt
17 with a Moyer problem in the last two years. The
18 only official documentation we have of ever being
19 on anything was a corrective action and I just
20 ran down for you all four items on that
21 corrective action and we satisfied them as a
22 board and as a school.

23 Ms. Pat is absolutely correct. We
24 decided to make another decision. We could no



1 longer -- and I appreciate K12, some of their
2 representatives are here tonight, but we could
3 not allow our children to be mistreated any
4 longer. K12 is with the State when they decided
5 to start this thing up, but we saw they were
6 bringing in the wrong leadership. As a matter of
7 fact, I went to the school where my daughter is
8 going to right now and we found a principal, we
9 found a curriculum director and a vice-principal
10 who can satisfy the students who are in Delaware,
11 not students from across the Country who they
12 have no clue on what to do with our children who
13 are in some cases troubled and have issues.

14 I challenge you, Mr. Whittaker and
15 Mr. Coverdale, to please look into it and see
16 that the two years is what they are saying we're
17 judging Moyer on. I know definitely, Mr.
18 Whittaker, you have been on the board when the
19 old Moyer was there, but the reality of it is the
20 old Moyer has nothing to do with us.

21 And I apologize for the behaviors of
22 the past, but the reality of it is the last two
23 years we have had some shortcomings and I will
24 never deny that. I'm a pastor and I'm a



1 Christian first. We have had some challenging
2 moments, but we made a decision that we got four
3 years in total, but this would have to be the
4 year where if we did not do it, Bebe was very
5 clear to me and I was very clear to her, we will
6 surrender our charter. We even put that in our
7 response. We said we would surrender it because
8 if we can't help these children, I would not want
9 my name assigned to it and neither would those of
10 us who are on that board.

11 It's not asking for a job, we don't
12 get paid, but it hurts, it hurts, to see bullying
13 going on to the level that has happened and I'm
14 doing it because I can do it and I can get away
15 with it; but, I challenge the State Board to get
16 into the details and recognize why isn't Moyer's
17 curriculum approved? Is it true that Springboard
18 is what we are already using in some of the
19 schools in Math, English? How come they didn't
20 get through?

21 If you are dealing with capacity, our
22 sister has shared with you we have already gained
23 the capacity because we wanted to make sure that
24 we had someone outside to be able to do the



1 coaching that is needed that our children will be
2 able to fill those gaps where they may be missing
3 in their academic intellectual curiosity. So, in
4 saying that, and I know my three minutes was up
5 three minutes ago, but I'm a preacher and that's
6 how we do it, three minutes extra, I thank you.

7 I'm going to stop, but can I just say
8 this one thing lastly? Shame, shame, shame on
9 DOE. We were told -- and this is without any
10 emotion -- we were told, the board, that the
11 University of Delaware people would come in and
12 they would help you all to identify your
13 weaknesses and when they have identified your
14 weaknesses, that we would even support to make
15 sure we get stronger. When I got that e-mail as
16 proof to how egregious this school is, shame.
17 That's not who we are. That is not who we are.

18 I have to be able to believe in the
19 DOE system and when we use something to hurt
20 people just because we got to prove our point how
21 bad a school is, that's not fair. I beg you to
22 please be more diligent in how you are trying to
23 close schools because in this case we don't get
24 any money. We do pump into the school, but we



1 don't get any money and I feel really bad about
2 that. And to the State Board members I hope you
3 all will see us as more than a problem. We are
4 in the right trajectory at this point and we are
5 moving forward. Thank you.

6 (Audience applause.)

7 MS. NAGOURNEY: Thank you. Are there
8 any other representatives from the school who
9 wish to speak?

10 (No response.)

11 MS. NAGOURNEY: We will now accept
12 comments from the public.

13 MR. McDUFFY: Greetings to the board
14 and to the community and to the educators.
15 Pastor Louis McDuffy is my name. I'm a
16 supervisor, of course, of many churches, but also
17 started teaching high school 50 years ago and in
18 teaching high school at one point I was in
19 Philadelphia and I taught at a school very
20 similar to what you have here. It was special
21 education. Our job was to take children who had
22 never been able to learn to the top and that
23 school was supposed to be the best at it in the
24 nation, Boone School, Hancock and Wildey Street



1 in Philadelphia.

2 Now, as chairman at one point of the
3 Education Committee For Ministers I came into
4 Moyer to see if we could help some years ago. In
5 coming in we brought a team in who has been part
6 of the Rodel Foundation. In fact, we did the
7 work on the Rodel Foundation because we were all
8 retired educators and we found there were some
9 things and we talked to them and they
10 straightened them out and then they were on their
11 own.

12 Now, I continued to ask the secretary
13 if he would allow us to come in with the models
14 we used on the calendar that we developed and
15 help not just Moyer, but any of the other
16 schools. I've been asking him for years would he
17 allow those students who came through this system
18 who are now part of Harvard University, Yale
19 University, Johns Hopkins, they're lawyers, my
20 children's friends from Princeton and so forth.
21 I brought them in to create a model where we
22 brought the crime down to zero because there is a
23 relationship according to the Surgeon General's
24 report on youth violence between education and



1 how we deal with abhorrent behavior and violence.

2 All these years he has not at one
3 time allowed a meeting where I could bring the
4 leading models of the United States in to help
5 the schools supervisors in this State, not one
6 time. Not one time has anybody who is over a
7 charter school -- I know our friend here has only
8 been there a year -- have they ever responded to
9 come out and give me any information of what they
10 need, how I could bring these folks in who came
11 out of this system with the leading professors,
12 doctors, lawyers, educators.

13 My daughter works for Congress. My
14 other daughter has a top medical practice and is
15 a consultant. My children are all over the
16 United States. I bring them in, their friends
17 come in, but not one time has anybody allowed a
18 meeting so we could help bring this system up
19 like we do our models. That is unfortunate and
20 that's a shame. And to continue to do that and
21 then to say you are going to decide whether you
22 will permit a school to survive and you have not
23 admitted anybody in, most African Americans who
24 are brilliant and gifted from around this Country



1 came through this system, it's terrible.

2 I will watch my words here, but
3 that's a disgrace and I don't think he should do
4 any more considering of who is not going to be
5 here and take the time for us to bring some of
6 the folks in from the models that work, supposed
7 to be the leading models of the United States,
8 and let us take a look at some of these things
9 and then make a decision on how he will keep it
10 in the future. And that these children who you
11 have here now become gifted and brilliant and
12 successful like the children that have gone ahead
13 of them.

14 Last point, charter school
15 information, these are the top charter school
16 information in the United States. I'm part of
17 what is called -- it's kind of hard to say for us
18 to understand what I'm saying, but it's called
19 the Military Child Education Correlation. I'm a
20 disabled veteran and I've counseled veterans for
21 over 40 years, returning veterans. I'm trained
22 in a number of forms of psychotherapy as well as
23 education and in the month of July we had our
24 meeting. I brought up the idea of this charter



1 school and the other charter schools and I was
2 surprised at some of the information they gave me
3 and I wondered how much of that information is
4 funneling to the State when you will not allow
5 any experts to come in.

6 I don't have any more time here, but
7 I could read you some of the things you have got
8 to do if you have a charter school. I asked
9 them, I said, What is the problem? All your
10 charter schools in the military none of them have
11 closed? You give me all these other ones around
12 the Country. What is wrong with Delaware? He
13 says, It's the way it starts. If the State won't
14 listen to the information we give them, it won't
15 start them.

16 The only question now is because I
17 don't want to take no more time is how is he
18 going to close something when he has not
19 permitted any of the leading experts to come in?
20 God bless.

21 (Audience applause.)

22 MS. NAGOURNEY: One more speaker
23 signed up. Mr. Street?

24 MR. STREET: This is deja vu for me



1 in that last September I have got a hearing, Del
2 Technical College called Reach. I heard the
3 State Board not choose to close Reach and fore-
4 warned that if it did, litigation was inevitable.
5 January this year we were at trial. Before the
6 winter was out Reach had an injunction and it
7 remained open. Now, I'm not going to beg. I'm
8 just going to ask you to do what is right and let
9 you know if you don't do what is right, what is
10 forthcoming.

11 Our fact of the matter is we all got
12 to play the hand that is dealt. You can go to
13 last week and the Governor stood on the steps and
14 he said, Bancroft is failing, Stubbs is failing,
15 Shortlidge is failing, Warner is failing. Those
16 are the feeder schools into Moyer. What he left
17 out was Eisenberg that serves Riverside and the
18 Colonial School District where the scores are
19 just terribly egregious. I'm not a proponent of
20 charter schools and, Dr. Whittaker, you were
21 there when the State Board issued the charter and
22 I'm sitting there on another matter and, Oh, when
23 Councilman Gregory was there it's going to be the
24 best thing since sliced bread.



1 I didn't say it, but what makes you
2 all think he is Houdini and he can do for \$10,000
3 per child what the public schools can't do for
4 about \$15,000 for a child. The fact of the
5 matter is I was right, but the problem with that
6 is DOE giveth, but once you giveth you are not
7 going to taketh away not without a fight.
8 Because if you look at the test scores and you
9 disaggregate the test scores, Math and Reading,
10 by low income and race, the public schools in
11 some cases are just as bad, if not worse, and
12 nobody is talking about closing them.

13 (Audience applause.)

14 So, in fundamental fairness now I sat
15 down there and listened to the Accountability
16 Committee and they came in with what was
17 basically a seven-count indictment of Moyer
18 Academy. Nobody talked about providing any
19 additional resources, nobody talked about
20 solutions. The seven-count indictment and we got
21 them this time, we dotted all the I's and crossed
22 all the T's. The problem with that is there are
23 other letters in the alphabet.

24 (Audience applause.)



1 And in this matter here is the
2 problem you had. The kids who attend Moyer now
3 that reside in the Colonial School District they
4 leave Moyer, they're bussed out of the City of
5 Wilmington for 13 years. And they're bussed from
6 the lowest income area of the City to the lowest
7 income area of the County to the failing schools
8 that you have in the County. If they live in
9 Christina and you take their failing school, now
10 they're going to be bussed past Bancroft, bussed
11 past Palmer and bussed past Bayard to the failing
12 schools and Christiana High School and Glasgow
13 and Newark in an area that is non-contiguous to
14 the City of Wilmington.

15 So, what is that? It's a substantive
16 violation of the Neighborhood School Act. In the
17 matter in 2007 of City of Wilmington versus
18 Christina the court ruled that the proposed
19 closing of Pulaski, Stubbs, Palmer and Bayard was
20 a violation of the Neighborhood School Act. So,
21 if you come forward with that I think the
22 likelihood of success on the merits of the
23 Neighborhood School Act being violated I think
24 it's meritorious, it's a meritorious argument.



1 On top of that it's a violation of the
2 Neighborhood School Act.

3 Where is our choice? The children
4 and the parents who are attending Moyer now chose
5 Moyer. They knew full well what the problem was,
6 but they're saying we need love and attention and
7 apparently they're getting it because ain't
8 nobody leaving. But, when you live in the City,
9 here is your choice, you either go to a
10 segregated high poverty charter school or you go
11 to a segregated high poverty high school and
12 neither which is acceptable. We don't have a
13 choice to go somewhere else because the Choice
14 School Act doesn't provide transportation.

15 Now, at the end of the day it has
16 opened up Pandora's box and the Deputy Attorney
17 General understands. If Moyer goes in as
18 chairman of the education committee, NAACP, and
19 president effective, if Moyer goes in, we are not
20 staying out. It will have to be litigated on the
21 violation of the Neighborhood School Act and on
22 the violation of the Choice School Act. The
23 problem that creates for the State in the big
24 scheme of things is neither of those acts have



1 withstood a constitutional test and maybe it's
2 time.

3 So, if you want to know how long it's
4 going to take to come this way, probably two,
5 three more years.

6 (Audience applause.)

7 MR. CURRY: Chris Curry. I know I
8 already spoke, but I just want to say to the
9 State Board members if you were there at the CSAC
10 meeting, they only had three, four members of
11 CSAC there. The chair called for a motion and it
12 took about two minutes for a response because
13 they too were shocked that this is your
14 recommendation, but when bullying is instituted
15 they knew they had jobs because all of them
16 report to the secretary. But it was silence for
17 the motion and the second and if you read the
18 report, one of them didn't even vote in favor of
19 it because they knew this was egregious and it
20 was bullying in its best sense, everybody
21 reporting to the secretary who is on that
22 committee, but you all, and that's why I'm hoping
23 you will do the right thing.

24 (Audience applause.)



1 MS. NAGOURNEY: Is there anyone else
2 who wishes to speak? I want to thank you all for
3 joining us today --

4 A VOICE: One more speaker.

5 MR. SMITH: My name is Richard Smith
6 and I'm the state president for the NAACP. I'm
7 here to say that my executive board and myself we
8 voted to take the State of Delaware to court on
9 all schools, especially dealing with blacks,
10 charters and public. We were looking at the way
11 we were treated in Wilmington since deseg and we
12 got four school districts plus a vo-tech is not
13 treating us right. Now you got the charter
14 schools. I had a superintendent tell me that
15 your 252 kids from Wilmington you can have them
16 in Wilmington, we don't need them.

17 When I look at suspensions and
18 expulsions I look at a pipeline from school to
19 jail. When I look at Moyer and when we got
20 around the table together it was to save kids
21 like I used to be from a broken home, from a
22 parent who is drunk, who drunk liquor, from our
23 neighborhood who had all types of stuff in from
24 our kids, our neighborhood, who have enough



1 problems and stuff. These folks are dealing with
2 kids just like I was.

3 I came to the top. Can somebody
4 decide to care for me? I wound up making
5 \$115,000.00 a year. Can somebody care for me? I
6 wound up going to Brazil, Argentina, around the
7 Country without going to the Service. Can
8 somebody care for me? I wound up being president
9 of this board, that board, because somebody cared
10 for me. Now I'm the president of the NAACP. I
11 talk to my national and what I'm saying that the
12 two charter schools that Jay was talking about,
13 this one and the other school, it's the same
14 thing.

15 When I talk to the secretary of
16 education he told me he know urban policy. I
17 came from urban policy, I know urban policy. He
18 don't know urban policy. He don't know about the
19 guns, the drugs, the rapes in the young kids'
20 houses. He don't know about no food. He don't
21 know about parents being a drug addict and the
22 kid trying to go to school. He don't know that,
23 but these folks do. They know how to deal with
24 the residue because every Sunday they are in



1 church, they prayer and they feel.

2 We need a high school in Wilmington.
3 We need a school that cares about us. You all
4 can make all the judgments you want, but you guys
5 go home to nice houses and stuff, nice cars and
6 stuff. Your kids go in the good schools and
7 stuff. Our kids are not doing this. I send my
8 kids to Howard High Vo-Tech and then I found out
9 when she went to college we had to send her to
10 Del Tech to get re-trained for elementary
11 education because she wasn't prepared.

12 Dr. Freeman, Christiana, those kids
13 ain't prepared. Those kids leave and go to jail.
14 If you go over the Young prison and you go up on
15 the second floor, there is kids that are 12-years
16 old up to 18 years ready to do 37, 47 years in
17 jail. Take a look, jail time, jail time. We are
18 not going to let you all down and we are not
19 going to let you all run over them. If we got to
20 protest, if we go to do what we got to do, we
21 will do what we got to do to save our babies.
22 This ain't about these teachers and you guys.
23 This is about our babies in the hood and we love
24 our babies.



1 So, I ain't going to beg you. They
2 can beg you. Only thing I can say is we need to
3 go back to court and let the government protect
4 us again like we used to when we didn't have this
5 problem. Thank you.

6 (Audience applause.)

7 MS. NAGOURNEY: Is there anyone else
8 who wants to speak?

9 MS. DOBSON: Good evening, my name is
10 Waynna Dobson. I am a parent on East 17th
11 Street, which is just a few blocks away from
12 Moyer Academy. I beseech you to please do not
13 close Moyer Academy. I encounter with the young
14 men and young women that live in the community
15 that attend Moyer Academy. Their lives are
16 changing. Their demeanor is changing.
17 Everything about them is changing. How they
18 think about themselves is changed because finally
19 there is a place that they can go, which I'm
20 going to call a safe haven, a place where people
21 genuinely care about them.

22 So, I was not going to say anything,
23 but there was no one here that represented the
24 neighborhood and that's where I come and I ask



1 you to please do not close Moyer Academy. Thank
2 you.

3 MS. NAGOURNEY: I want to thank you
4 all for participating today. The secretary will
5 consider your comments as part of the decision-
6 making process. The comments will also be
7 available for the State Board to consider. This
8 hearing is now closed.

9 (The hearing was concluded at 7:20
10 p.m.)

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5 CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER
6

7 I, Christina M. Vitale, Certified Court
8 Reporter and Notary Public, do hereby certify
9 that the foregoing record, pages 1 to 53
10 inclusive, is a true and accurate transcript of
11 my stenographic notes taken on Wednesday,
12 September 10, 2014 in the above-captioned matter.
13

14 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
15 hand and seal this 16th day of September, 2014,
16 at Wilmington.
17

18 
19

20 Christina M. Vitale, CCR
21
22
23
24



\$	account (1) 12:10	ain't (4) 47:7	another (5) 20:8	46:24
	Accountability (9)	51:13,22 52:1	26:1 33:18	around (4) 41:24
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\$10,000 (1) 45:2	10:16 12:19,	29:19 30:3	anybody (5) 24:4,	50:6
\$115,000.00 (1)	22 13:12	aligning (1) 30:8	12 41:6,17,23	ask (9) 2:24
50:5	22:24 45:15	all (49) 7:2 8:12	anymore (1) 35:1	4:23 9:21
\$13,000 (2)	acknowledge (1)	9:4 11:11	anyone (8) 4:13,	24:11 25:18
28:10 33:18	18:15	13:18 14:5	17 7:18 18:1	26:6 40:12
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10 33:17	across (1) 36:11	23 25:7,11,16,	anyplace (1)	43:8
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